

OTHER NOTICES

Ashwell, Lena. *Myself a Player.* London, 1936. Michael Joseph Ltd. Pp. 288. Price 15s.

THIS autobiography of a brave and determined woman has for us the added interest that its author is the sister of Miss Hilda Pocock, the Propaganda Secretary of the *Eugenics Society*. The Pococks are an enterprising and resourceful family and all who read this story, with its unusual blending of reticence and frankness, will not merely be pleased by the profusion of amusing anecdotes, but will realize that in their manysidedness, their endurance and love of adventure, and their stern integrity, the Pococks are a family which should rejoice the heart of the *Eugenics Society*.

Lena and Hilda spent their most impressionable years on a ship, their father being a sea captain, who at that time was in charge of the Wellesley Training Ship of boys "unconvicted of crime but under suspicion." As "the captain's daughters" they acquired a superiority complex, which has doubtless proved a useful asset through life. Their great-uncle, Nicolas Pocock, "was the famous sea-painter, and most of his pictures—'Lord Howe's Victory,' 'The Nile,' 'Trafalgar,' etc.—were painted from his actual experiences during these great sea-fights." Their "father began his life at sea as a midshipman aged eleven, and his first adventure was in the capture of a slaver, an experience which he recounted vividly as he was dying at the age of seventy." Their brother, "Roger Pocock, is now well known throughout the Empire as the founder of the Legion of Frontiersmen, for his many adventures, and his many books."

The author of *Myself a Player* proves that she was just as brave and adventurous in her day, when she insisted upon making a career for herself on the stage, as any of her seafaring forbears who fought and depicted the great sea-battles of England. Her present devotion to the art of concentration and meditation, which leads to the revelation "of a principle which radiates through the Cosmos," will doubtless be an inspiration to many.

URSULA GRANT DUFF.

Davenport, C. B., and Ekas, Merle P. *Statistical Methods in Biology, Medicine and Psychology.* Fourth edition. New York, 1936. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Pp. 216. Price 13s. 6d.

THIS work, of which the first edition was published in 1899, contains accounts of a miscellaneous collection of statistical processes, ranging from the calculation of various types of mean, to methods of fitting the Pearsonian system of curves. The work purports to be written for students who have little or no knowledge of statistics, but its treatment of the subject is entirely uncritical, and no advice is

tendered on the vital question of the circumstances in which the methods described may appropriately be used. The present edition claims to have been brought up to date by the inclusion of an account of the more recent developments, such as Student's *t* test and the analysis of variance procedure, but the treatment is exceedingly superficial, and of little use to the practical worker.

F. YATES.

Gebhard, Bruno (Editor). *Wunder des Lebens.* Berlin, 1936. Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft. Pp. 429. Price RM. 24.

THIS is a truly wonderful production, which other countries may well envy. Indeed I was held up at the French frontier for three-quarters of an hour whilst the Customs official became completely absorbed and thrilled by the 300 illustrations. When I remonstrated and said: "Surely books are permitted?" he replied: "Certainly, Madam, but this one interests me profoundly," and continued to turn over the pages and gaze with admiration and astonishment at the vivid pictures and diagrams. Thus it will be realized that it is not necessary to understand the German language in order to appreciate this profusely and brilliantly illustrated work. It contains six chapters—three by B. Gebhard himself on "The Family as the carrier of Life," "The Family as the Germ-cell of National Life," and "Life in Sickness and in Health." These are entirely admirable. They are preceded by three other chapters, "The Origin and Beginnings of Life" by Dr. phil. Herbert Michael; "The Life of Man," by Dr. phil. Gerhard A. Brecher, and "The Story of Inheritance and Race in Mankind," by Studienassessor Hatto Weiss. These are also excellent and most interesting—but the latter is perhaps naturally tinged by National Socialistic *Weltanschauung*, from which the rest of the book is laudably free.

URSULA GRANT DUFF.

Nelson, N. C. *The Antiquity of Man in America in the Light of Archæology.* Publication 3372. Washington, D.C., 1935. *Smithsonian Report.*
Hrdlička, A. *The Coming of Man from Asia in the Light of Recent Discoveries.* Publication 3371.

THE author of the first of these pamphlets reviews the evidence for and against Pleistocene man in America and obviously feels that man is not of great antiquity in the New World. At the same time he hampers himself by his adherence to the surely very doubtful and difficult thesis that most of the remarkable cultural development of the New World was independent of Old World influences. He therefore feels it must have taken a considerable

stretch of time; he suggests some date about 2000 B.C. for the beginning of the great cultures of Peru and Middle America, a view which not many of the European students of Middle America would endorse. His paper is valuable for its indications that new evidence concerning early inhabitants of America keeps coming in.

Dr. Hrdlička's paper is based on Alaskan and Aleutian studies, and its conclusions will for the most part be welcomed by those who have worked at the subject from Europe or Asia. He says man came over gradually and disconnectedly during a long period, bringing different types, languages and cultures, some of the last being already very advanced. Man came to America skirting the western and southern coasts of Alaska. The Eskimo, in his opinion the last arrival, he considers a blood relation of the Indian. It may be impossible to recover material evidence from Western Alaska because of submergences and other changes; one must look rather to the western coastlands of America down to Mexico. The author emphasizes the amount of culture that, in his view, entered America already full-fledged.

The Hrdlička attitude is much easier to defend than that which seeks to interpret Mexico as a cultural development virtually independent of imported advanced ideas.

H. J. FLEURE.

Schottky, Johannes (Editor). *Rasse und Krankheit* (*Race and Disease*). Munich, 1937. J. F. Lehmanns Verlag. Pp. 468. Price RM. 16.20.

It is the outstanding and laudable quality of this book that it is not written by "race experts" but by clinicians, specializing in various branches of medicine. The interest of such men is not from the beginning focused exclusively on the race question. Their experience is wider, they know well that there are many causes of disease, and that even one and the same illness may be caused by different noxious agents. Therefore the book under review is not merely a statement of what is known about the relations between race and disease, but also—and perhaps still more—of what is not known, at least not yet. It is astonishing how often an apparently clear and simple case of racial influence reveals itself, after further analysis, as the result of a complicated interaction of environmental forces.

Besides a few chapters of a more general character dealing with race physiology and race mixture, this stately volume contains fifteen papers, covering the whole field of practical medicine, from internal diseases to dentistry. The literature, both German and foreign, is extensively drawn upon, and every real or alleged influence of the individual's racial background upon pathological processes amply discussed. It can be very warmly recommended to every scientist worker in this field.

C. TIETZE.

Vaughan, Kathleen Olga. *Safe Childbirth: The Three Essentials*. London, 1937. Baillière, Tindall & Cox. Pp. ix + 154. Price 7s. 6d.

THIS very readable little book is one that should be studied by all conscious of the pressing problems of maternal mortality, mental deficiency and infant wastage and especially by public health authorities. That the cause of all these lies very largely in "difficult childbirth" is well recognized, but whereas many workers seek a remedy for this in more efficient obstetrics and pre-natal recognition of abnormalities, Dr. Vaughan attacks the problem from a different angle and attempts to find the fundamental reasons for the difficulty, pointing out how singularly unsuccessful other methods have been in reducing maternal mortality and mental deficiency in the last twenty-five years. She has travelled far afield in her search for facts relating to childbirth and has collected evidence from places as far apart as Kashmir, South Africa, and the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, London.

Her considered conclusion is that the three essentials for safe and easy childbirth are a round pelvic brim, flexible pelvic joints, and natural posture during labour. She points out that these desiderata are most commonly found in various primitive open-air races, and that when they are present easy labour is the rule, foetal and maternal mortality and morbidity are rare, and sepsis almost unknown. The oval pelvis, so commonly met with in English and American women, is at a great disadvantage mechanically compared with the pelvis having a nearly circular brim, and although an Englishwoman may have a relatively larger pelvis than a Bush woman or Andaman Islander, the reduction of the true conjugate in relation to the transverse diameter, together with stiffening up of pelvic joints, makes the birth of the foetal skull, which at its usual circumference of engagement (suboccipito-bregmatic) is almost circular, relatively much more difficult. The author maintains that the circular pelvic brim is the normal and traces the development of the oval brim to environmental rather than to hereditary factors. The factors she blames most are faulty posture and diet and lack of sunlight. The wearing of high heels, long hours of sitting on chairs or at desks, particularly during the years of rapid bony pelvic growth (10-15 years), and the complete abandonment of the squatting position both for defaecation and rest are the chief postural errors. Lack of open-air life and sunlight and vitamin deficiency are largely responsible for rickets and osteomalacia, either of which will aggravate the bony deformities initiated by faulty posture. She produces evidence that dental caries and abnormal gait, both of which are commonly associated with rickets, are essentially absent from races spending hard-working, open-air lives, and that the women of these races have round pelvic brims and easy labours. The natural mobility of the pelvic joints

is another important aid to easy labour and is being lost by many civilized peoples, particularly town-dwellers, owing to their sedentary habits and failure to make use of the squatting position.

Finally, Dr. Vaughan discusses the positions adopted by women during labour; and produces much evidence to show that squatting, sitting or various kinds of kneeling positions are the most common primitive and natural ones. These positions open out the pelvis and allow the sacrum to pivot freely as the foetal head, assisted by gravity, descends through the pelvis. The completely recumbent (lateral or dorsal) positions have crept into use during comparatively recent times and were probably adopted partly on the grounds of modesty and partly for the convenience of the accoucheur, who found it easier to deliver the child and control the perineum in these positions.

One of the great attractions of the book is that the author has something constructive to offer. She maintains that by taking thought it may be possible, if not to add a cubit to one's stature, at any rate to add a centimetre to the true conjugate at the expense of the transverse pelvic diameter. This she suggests must be done by tackling the problem through the rising generation, first by increasing the incidence of adequate breast feeding for infants, secondly by giving the growing girl longer hours out of doors and suitable exercises and posture while at work to correct lordosis and sacral tilt, and finally by reducing the height of heels and encouraging squatting. Much also could be done by giving women suitable exercises *during* pregnancy, by advising them to defæcate in a squatting position and by teaching and encouraging them to use the most advantageous positions for childbirth.

For anæsthesia during labour Dr. Vaughan would appear to have little use, except possibly

during the last few pains when the head is being born or for cases needing manipulative or operative interference. She points out only too rightly how futile it is to talk of producing a highly selected and genetically sound race if many of its best specimens (more particularly males) are destroyed or damaged at birth. Although the case is by no means proven, and although it would be possible to pick holes in the argument, the general idea is of such arresting importance that, as Professor Howard Kelly says in the foreword, it deserves our fullest and fairest consideration.

MARGARET C. N. JACKSON.

Walshe, F. M. R., et al. *Training of the Neurologist and Psychiatrist*. New York, 1936. Reprinted from the *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry*, Vols. 29-32.

THE Editor of the *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry* has done service to medical education in collecting this series of papers. The contributors include neurologists, with a clinical, pathological, or surgical bias, two psychiatrists, and a specialist in diseases of children. On many points they are in agreement: they insist on a thorough training in biology and in medicine for anyone who deals with nervous affections; they deplore narrow specialization, and they condemn vigorously the notion that as a preparation for giving psychological treatment nothing more is necessary than that the therapist should have been psycho-analysed and have read works on medical psychology. Although many of the writers refer to the value of a biological equipment and outlook, they do not mention specifically any training in genetics; yet the psychiatrist, whether in his daily practice or in research, is confronted frequently with problems of heredity.

A. J. LEWIS.